branch out

Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

PennState

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Overview

Thrive is a portfolio of evidence-informed parenting programs that is designed to empower parents and caregivers as they nurture children from the prenatal period until 18 years of age. The Thrive Initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Defense's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (DoD MC&FP) and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse).

Web-Based Thrive Universal Parenting Programs

There are four developmentally age-appropriate universal parenting programs within the Thrive Initiative that are available in a web-based format. Each of the Thrive Initiative universal parenting programs conveys knowledge, skills, and strategies within three overarching learning domains: positive parenting practices, stress management, and child physical-health promotion. The four universal parenting programs are available online at no cost to military and civilian parents and caregivers. Parents and caregivers can register and complete a Thrive program by visiting the Thrive website at https://thrive.psu.edu. Anyone who requires assistance can contact the Clearinghouse Thrive Team at thrive@psu.edu or by calling the Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Team at 1-877-382-9185.

Thrive Initiative Program Areas			
Universal Parenting Programs			
Take Root	Sprout	Grow	Branch Out
Infants (0 to 6 months)	Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Grades K–5 (5 to 10 years)	Grades 6–12 (10 to 18 years)
Infants (6 to 12 months)			
Infants & Toddlers (1 to 3 years)			

Branch Out

The focus of this manual is the Branch Out online program - the Thrive parenting program for parents and caregivers of children who are 10 to 18 years old.

Purpose of the Branch Out Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

The purpose of this facilitation manual is to offer guidance to professionals on how to implement the Branch Out parenting program in a hybrid format. Specifically, this manual will provide the facilitator with implementation instruction for group face-to-face or virtual synchronous interaction while parents and caregivers complete the online asynchronous program.

Objectives

- Outline the components of the Branch Out parenting program.
- Provide guidance for how to implement face-to-face or virtual group meetings in conjunction with parents and caregivers as they complete the online modules.
- Present templates for recruitment tools, parent workbooks, scheduling examples, and preprinted resources.

Training

Thrive will provide training to prepare you, the facilitator, for a hybrid implementation of Branch Out. You'll begin by (1) taking the online General Facilitation Training, (2) completing the web-based Branch Out parenting program, and (3) using this manual to guide your implementation.

General Facilitation Training

Thrive will provide training to prepare you, the facilitator, for a hybrid implementation of Branch Out. You'll begin by (1) taking the online General Facilitation Training, (2) completing the web-based Branch Out parenting program, and (3) using this manual to guide your implementation.

- Fidelity;
- Program reach;
- Participant responsiveness;
- Logistics, dosage, and content adherence;
- Delivery quality; and
- Facilitation skills to assist during challenging situations.

To register for the General Facilitation Training, visit the Thrive Facilitator Portal at https://thrivefacilitator.lms.militaryfamilies.psu.edu

Create a user name and password, and sign in. Under Thrive Facilitator Training, Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Training, click on "General Facilitation Training," and take the course.

The General Facilitation Training takes approximately 2 hours to complete. You can complete this training at your own pace. You do not need to complete the General Facilitation Training in one sitting; you can break and continue later wherever you stopped.

Branch Out

When you are logged in through the Thrive Facilitator Portal, you are automatically enrolled into the available web-based Thrive programs. Click on Branch Out and select "Start Course" to begin the program. Branch Out content is shared in 8 online modules and a Conclusion/Wrap Up module.

As you complete each module, download the tools and resources provided. You can use these resources to learn more about a topic and support your discussions during your meetings with participants.

Branch Out Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

Once you complete the online General Facilitation Training and web-based Branch Out program, continue using this manual as your guide as you prepare for a hybrid implementation of Branch Out.

Do not move forward until you have competed the General Facilitator Training and the web-based Branch Out program.

Planning

In the General Facilitation Training, you learned about two roles that a facilitator may fulfill - the coordinating facilitator and the delivery facilitator. These roles may be fulfilled by two separate individuals, or you may find yourself in a position where you need to perform both roles.

If an individual is the designated *coordinating facilitator*, this individual will likely be supporting these elements:

- Recruitment;
- Registration and attendance;
- General preparation for modules, such as scheduling modules, sending out invitations, providing technical assistance on the day of modules, and offering general support for the delivery facilitator.

If an individual is the designated *delivery facilitator*, this individual will likely be doing the following:

- Preparing for each module according to the Branch Out Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual and
- Facilitating the discussion at each meeting.

Initial Preparation

Format

Thrive programming that is offered in a hybrid format intends to support 10-12 families in a group format. There may be limitations, such as group size or space restrictions (if held in person). This manual provides a framework for small, multi-family group meetings. Remain flexible so you can focus on serving your families in the best way possible.

Location

Determine if you will be offering face-to-face in-person meetings, virtual online meetings, or a combination of the two. If you are offering face-to-face meetings in a group format, you'll need to find a location that accommodates a group. If you're offering virtual meetings, choose a teleconferencing program that does not require paid access for your families and offers adequate privacy protection.

Recruitment and Advertising for Hybrid Implementation

For the hybrid implementation of Branch Out, you'll be recruiting parents and caregivers of children who are 10 to 18 years old. Some suggestions for places to advertise or recruit include local schools, youth centers, gyms, shopping centers, grocery stores, family centers, community centers, websites, social media pages, the local newspaper, and organizational newsletters.

Be proactive. Know the dates and the times you will be meeting before you start recruitment and advertising. When recruiting and advertising the hybrid implementation of Branch Out, share how you will be meeting (i.e., virtually or face-to-face); explain some basic information about the dates, times, structure, and time commitment; and list a Point of Contact (POC) for questions. Other information you may want to consider adding could include whether child care is provided, whether snacks or refreshments are available, or whether there is a registration requirement. See an example of a recruitment and advertisement resource in Appendix A. *Branch Out Recruitment Poster*.

Registration and Attendance

Registration is recommended. Registration allows your participants to create a Thrive account prior to your first meeting and increases the chances that your families will understand the expectations of the hybrid implementation. It can also help with any organizational paperwork that may need to be completed. See the *Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet* in Appendix B - this can be used as a recruitment and registration tool. Take attendance in accordance with your organization's policies.

Preparing and Disseminating Meeting Information

Before you start to recruit and register participants, you should prepare the following:

- *Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet* (Appendix B),
- *Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter* (Appendix C), and
- *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* (Appendix D).

Details on how to prepare each item follow.

Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet (Appendix B)

This is a tool you can use to track individuals who are interested in learning more about the hybrid implementation of Branch Out. This sheet offers the steps you can take to provide the information your potential participants will need and guides you through the hybrid implementation process - from interest to registration. Work within your organization's rules and policies to maintain the *Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet,* or modify it to fit your needs. Specific instructions for completing each column are included with the tracking sheet.

Branch Out Hybrid Implementation Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Participant Name	Email Address	Child's Date of Birth	Today's Date	Child's Calculated Age (Years)	Parent Welcome Letter – Date Sent	Thrive Account Registration Confirmed (Y/N)	Registration in Hybrid Implementation Confirmed (Y/N)	Parent Workbook and Syllabus Sent
Example, Participant	email@address.com	7/07/2005	5/04/2022	16 Years	4/30/22	Yes	Yes	☑

Figure 1
The Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet (Appendix B)

Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter (Appendix C)

Prepare the Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter by entering the following information:

- Dates and times for each meeting,
- Homework due dates, and
- POC information.

Send the letter when prompted according to the *Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet.* This letter includes instructions for registration, an overview of the days and times of the meetings, and brief details about the time commitment and expectations.

Figure 2
The Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter (Appendix C)

Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus (Appendix D)

During your planning process, prepare the syllabus for your families. Fill in the information for the meetings, and include the following:

- Registration deadline (if applicable),
- Dates and times for each meeting *in the Meeting Summary area and for each meeting*, and
- Homework due dates.

Mail or email your families the *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* upon registration.
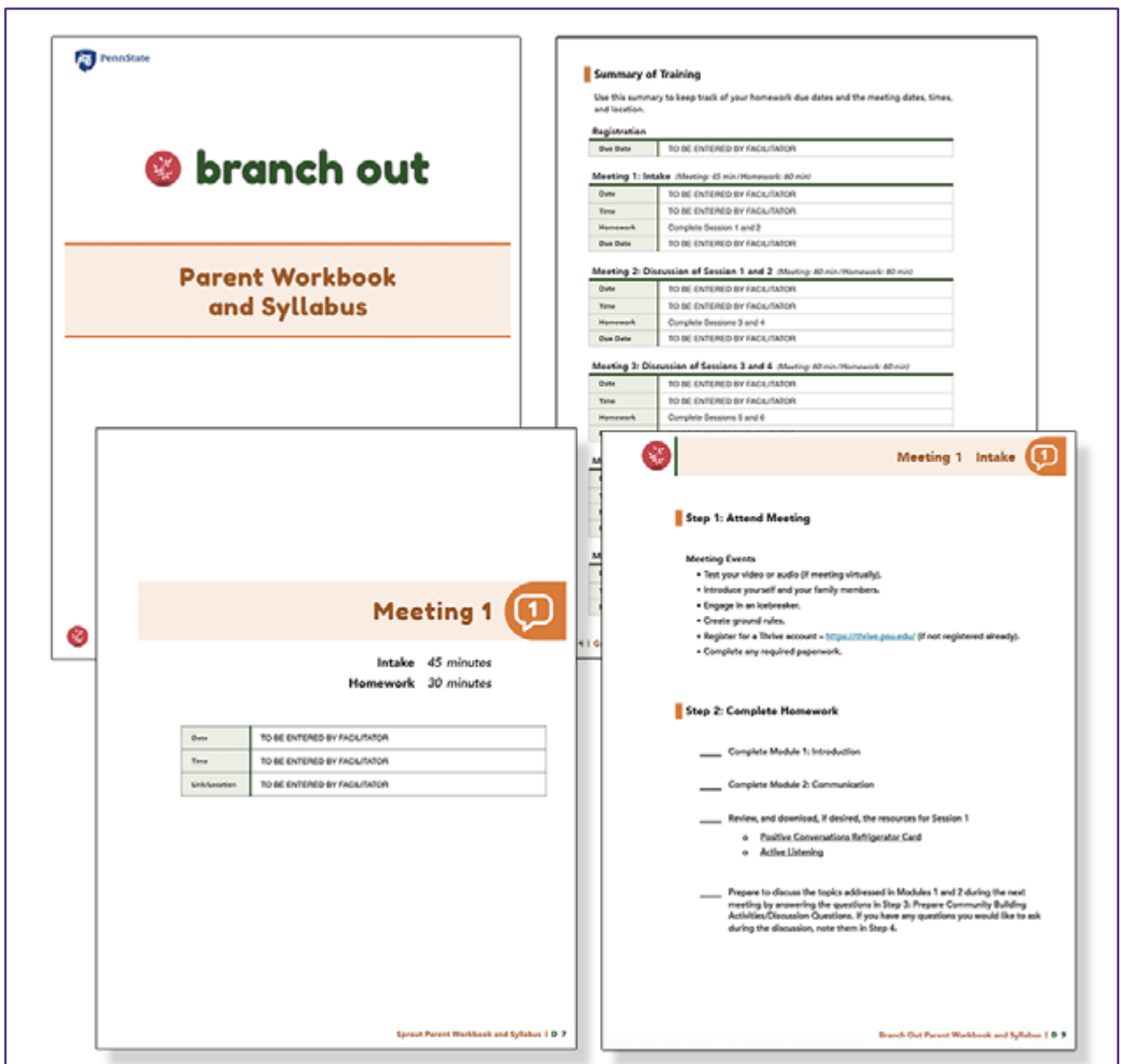
Figure 3
The Branch Out Workbook and Syllabus (Appendix D)

Supplies

Whether your hybrid implementation is face-to-face or virtual, you will need to provide your participants with the following:

- The *Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter* and
- A printed or electronic copy of the *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus.* This provides clear instructions on how to register for a Thrive account and offers detailed information about the dates, times, location, topics, and homework for each meeting.

A face-to-face hybrid implementation of Branch Out will require the following:

- A computer for participants to use to sign in on the Thrive website and use to complete modules,
- Internet access, and
- A flip chart or whiteboard/blackboard.

A virtual hybrid implementation of Branch Out will require these items:

- A computer,
- Internet access, and
- A virtual platform for online meetings that has the ability for shared workspaces such as screen sharing.

Implementation

Overview of Branch Out Hybrid Implementation and Meeting Agenda

For the hybrid implementation of Branch Out, the participants will complete independent online modules on their own time *and* will meet with you either virtually or face-to-face.

Branch Out Online Modules

Branch Out is separated into 8 modules and a Conclusion/Wrap Up module and is completed by parents and caregivers **independently online.**

- Modules 1- 8
  - o Module 1: Introduction
  - o Module 2: Communication
  - o Module 3: Developmental Milestones
  - o Module 4: Mental Health
  - o Module 5: Working Together and Growing as a Family
  - o Module 6: Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth
  - o Module 7: Healthy Relationships and Sexuality
  - o Module 8: Technology in Family Life
  - o Conclusion/Wrap Up

Branch Out Meetings

Interactions with your parents and caregivers can be completed in six meetings. These meetings optimally occur in a group and are either face-to-face or virtual.

The schedule of events, potential questions, and prompts are provided for each meeting. The meeting agenda aligns with the *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus.*

Overview of Hybrid Implementation

- Meeting 1: Intake
  (45- to 60-Minute Meeting/60 Minutes of Homework)

- Meeting 2: Discussion of Modules 1 and 2
  (60-Minute Meeting/60 Minutes of Homework)

- Meeting 3: Discussion of Modules 3 and 4
  (60-Minute Meeting/60 Minutes of Homework)

- Meeting 4: Discussion of Modules 5 and 6
  (60-Minute Meeting/60 Minutes of Homework)

- Meeting 5: Discussion of Modules 7 and 8
  (60-Minute Meeting/60 Minutes of Homework)

- Meeting 6: Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing
  (45-Minute Meeting)

Meeting Agenda

Facilitators Meeting Guide

This section of the manual will guide you through each of your modules for Branch Out. Before each meeting, read the meeting agenda thoroughly, and prepare to discuss the questions and prompts.

Meeting 1 ①

Intake *(45 – 60 minutes)*
Homework *(60 minutes)*

Overview

Step 1: Welcome

Step 2: Provide Overview of Branch Out

Step 3: Introductions/Ice Breaker(s)

Step 4: Set Ground Rules

Step 5: Share Expectations

Step 6: Review Syllabus

Step 7: Assign Homework

Step 8: [If needed] Register for Branch Out Online Course

Step 1: Welcome your Families   *(10 minutes)*

Face-to-Face Meetings

Welcome your family or families as they walk in the door. For the first meeting, consider preparing reusable name tags for the adults so you can call each person by name. You can collect them at the end of the meeting for use at each meeting or ask the participants to bring them to each meeting. Help each person get settled and comfortable in the space. Track attendance if needed.

Virtual Meetings

If you choose to complete your meetings virtually, it is highly recommended that you partner with a coordinating facilitator or co-host. Your partner can help you with technological issues and serve as an additional POC for your families in case they have any issues joining or participating in the meeting. This will ensure you can fully focus on your families during the meeting while you also provide support for those families who may need extra help with technology.

Join the meeting early so individuals can test their computers (i.e., video and audio) before the start of the meeting. Consider using music and a simple message via screen share as a digital waiting room so families can troubleshoot their audio. An example can be found in *Appendix E.*

Welcome your families as they join the virtual platform. Encourage each participant to have their camera on and to enter their preferred name in the platform so you can call each individual by name. If you are tracking attendance, let your coordinating facilitator help you with this task.

Step 2: Provide Overview of Branch Out   *(10 minutes)*

Take time to discuss the following topics with your participants:

_____   Branch Out is an online parenting program for parents and caregivers of adolescent children who are 10 to 18 years old.

_____   Many changes and transitions occur during adolescence, so this phase of life is a time of excitement and anxiety – for youth and their parents.

_____   Throughout this program, we will offer information and parenting strategies for parents and caregivers to use and adapt, as necessary, to fit their child and their individual circumstances.

_____   We focus on helping parents and caregivers learn communication skills, and we encourage them to work with their adolescent to build a relationship that is centered around respect and trust.

_____   Some of what is read and practiced in this program could be familiar to the parents and caregivers, and they may already know about and use the disseminated information. Therefore, they may use this time as an opportunity to see and appreciate what already works for them and their child.

Step 2: Provide Overview of Branch Out   *(10 minutes)*

_____ Branch Out is divided into 8 modules. The program begins with an introduction module that is followed by a communication module. In this module, parents and caregivers will build upon skills and strategies they already have and will learn how to use these abilities when interacting with their adolescent. The next module introduces the developmental milestones adolescents experience and discusses the importance of children's mental health. In the next four modules, participants are presented with scenarios that focus on different topics. The scenarios are comprised of unique situations within different familial and individual contexts.

By the end of the program, parents and caregivers will be able to do the following:

- improve their communication with their adolescent by having open and honest interactions;

- find new ways to support their adolescent's development and independence;

- understand their adolescent is their own person and learn to be open to and acknowledge their adolescent's points of view;

- know when and how to establish developmentally appropriate boundaries and guidelines;

- cultivate and model positive relationships with those around them and their adolescent;

- help their adolescent build positive relationships with others;

- establish appropriate safety measures for their adolescent and for their family; and

- recognize the benefits and risks of digital-media engagement.

_____ After participants complete modules independently, your group will meet and discuss some questions related to the content. Further directions will be provided in *Step 5: Set Expectations.*

Step 3: Complete Introductions and Icebreakers   *(10 minutes)*

Start with a brief and modest introduction of yourself. Share any expertise you have regarding child development and include any other relevant characteristics about you that can help you relate to your audience (e.g., community member, organization, military affiliation).

For brevity, you can combine the families' introductions and icebreaker activity. *Note which icebreaker questions you ask. You may want to revisit questions or icebreakers, which you did not previously use, in future meetings when prompted.*

Examples of icebreaker questions include the following:

Tell me your name, your partner's name, your child's name, your child's age, and (one of the following):

_____   The hospital/state/country your child was born
(adjust based on your population).

_____   Your child's birthday.

_____   Your child's favorite book, television show, or movie.

_____   Your favorite thing about your child.

If you want your families to answer a few more questions to become more comfortable with talking and sharing, try one or two of these ice breaker questions.

_____ What was your least favorite food as a child? Do you still dislike it?

_____ What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

_____ What is your favorite item that you've purchased this year?

_____ What fictional family would you like to be a member of?

_____ What's your favorite tradition or holiday?

_____ What was your favorite game to play as a child?

_____ If you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?

_____ Would you rather be able to run at 100 miles per hour or fly at 10 miles per hour?

_____ What are you most excited about this year?

You can also start each meeting with an icebreaker if you find your group or family is reserved or quiet. Use your judgment, and avoid controversial topics.

Step 4: Set Ground Rules   *(10 minutes)*

Stating some ground rules and coming up with a few together as a group may help your families feel safe and supported as they share about their parenting journey. Offer a few ground rules, such as these:

- You will always start on time.
- You will always end on time.
- You will turn your cell phone on vibrate and would like everyone to do the same.
- If a group member must take a call, let them know they may quietly excuse themself (mute themselves, if in a virtual meeting) from the room.

Other rules you may come up with, as a group, include the following:

- Limit judgment about other participants' parenting habits or lack of knowledge in a particular area.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Assume positive intent.

! *This is also a great time to discuss your organization's confidentiality clauses regarding statements that are related to abuse- or neglect-mandated reporting with your participants.*

Things to Cover:

Ground Rules Set at Meeting:

Step 5: Set Expectations   *(5-10 minutes)*

Set realistic expectations with your families. Let them know they will be asked to independently complete online modules of Branch Out and come to meetings ready for discussion. Because the parents and caregivers will be independently completing the modules, you must ensure your parents and caregivers complete each module in its entirety. By doing this, your participants will gain valuable knowledge from each module. In other words, rather than covering the content again, the meetings should provide an opportunity for community building, reflection, and discussion with other parents and caregivers of adolescent children who are 10 to 18 years old.

Step 6: Review Syllabus   *(5 minutes)*

Provide copies or screen share a copy of the *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus.* Review the *Summary of Training*, and highlight the section where the families can find pertinent information. Encourage your families to complete all of the exercises and discussion questions for all of the meetings.

Step 7: Assign Homework   *(5 minutes)*

Ask your participants to complete the following Branch Out Online modules:
  • Module 1: Introduction
  • Module 2: Communication

Show the page in the *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* if possible. Completing these modules includes preparing answers to the questions listed in their *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* under Step 3: *Prepare Community Building Activities/ Discussion Questions.*

Step 8: [If needed] Register for the Online Course

If your participants are registered, dismiss them so you can provide support to those who are not registered.

If your participants are not registered, walk them through the process. Ensure they can log in and find the information they need to get started. Detailed instructions for creating a Thrive account and registering for Branch Out are in *Appendix D: Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus.*

FAQ for Participants

? *How long will it take me to complete a Branch Out Module?*

Individuals who have completed a Branch Out module report that it takes approximately 30 minutes to complete each module.

? *What happens if I am not able to access the content once I get home?*

You can try the "Forgot your password" option in the Log In area. If that is not successful, contact the Thrive Team by emailing thrive@psu.edu or call 1-877-382-9185.

? *What if I finish the Module and I want more information?*

Visit the Thrive website, blogs, resources, and updated information are released regularly. You can also follow Thrive on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/thriveparents

Meeting 2 ②

Discussion of Module 1 and 2

Introduction and Communication

Meeting   *(60 minutes)*
Homework   *(60 minutes)*

Overview

Step 1: Reintroduction

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Assign Homework

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 2 should be scheduled *at least 1 week after intake*. This timing allows your participants 1 week to review the content and resources for Modules 1 and 2 and practice some of the strategies that are shared.

Step 1: Allow Families an Opportunity to Reintroduce Themselves *(5 minutes)*

If the group was hesitant to talk during the Intake Meeting, consider doing a quick fun or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting section, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during that meeting.

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules   *(5 minutes)*

Ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion   *(45 minutes)*

During Meeting 2, discuss these questions as a group.

? Module 2: Daily Check-In Discussion Questions

One way to make the adolescent years more enjoyable and less stressful for you and your child is to intentionally create an environment that promotes trust and communication. You can encourage communication by using a daily check-in.

_____ Do you practice daily check-ins with your child? If so, what topics do you discuss?

_____ For those of you who are new to the concept of a daily check-in, did you try it with your child? Did you use the *Daily Agenda* template? How did your child respond?

_____ What are the potential benefits your family might experience by incorporating a daily check-in into your household routine?

Module 2: Create an Environment that Encourages Open Communication Discussion Questions

Module 2 describes additional strategies you can use to create an environment that promotes trust and communication such as planned family activities; rituals; and routines, like family meals, Friday movie nights, and family hikes.

_____ What kinds of activities does your family participate in together?

_____ Are there any new or additional activities you would like to start doing together as a family?

Module 2: Establishing Boundaries Discussion Questions

Trust within communication is very important - especially to an adolescent. As a parent, you may increase the likelihood that your child will discuss difficult topics with you if they under-stand and are comfortable with the boundaries you establish regarding your conversations. Confidentiality is one boundary that was discussed in the module.

_____ Have you discussed your confidentiality boundaries with your child? If so, is your child aware of the steps that will be followed if you need to break confidentiality? Do they understand the reason for and the importance of breaking that confidentiality?

The module also introduced the concept of "non-negotiable" rules in your home.

_____ Are there rules in your house that you consider "non-negotiable"? What is your reasoning behind those rules?

❓ Module 2: Positive Communication Discussion Questions

I-statements are a great way to start a conversation in a positive manner.

🌿 [Optional]: Display I-Statement Formula

- I *(Emotion)* — when *(Behavior)* — I *(How the Behavior Affects Me)*…..and I Need *(Requested Behavior)*.

_____ In the parent workbook, you were asked to rephrase a statement you made to your child that was not well received. Does anyone want to share how they would rephrase something they said to their child into an I-Statement?

[Note to Facilitator]: Choose one or two of the statements as an activity depending on time. Guide the participants through restating the following sentences using the I-Statement formula.

Let's practice positive communication by rephrasing a few statements using I-statements.

1. **Your room is such a mess! Why can't you clean up after yourself?**

   (*Example:* I feel disappointed to see your new clothes on the floor in your room. Money is tight right now, and I want to make sure we make the most of what we buy. Can I get your help to make sure your clothes maintain their good condition by putting them away in your closet?)

2. **Hurry up! We are always waiting on you to get out the door.**

   (*Example:* I feel stressed when we run behind schedule. I worry that if you're late to school, you'll miss something important. What can we do to make our morning run more smoothly, so we can get out the door on time?)

3. **How many times do I need to remind you to do your homework?**

   (*Example:* I feel worried about your commitment to getting your homework done on your own. If your grades suffer, you may need to do extra work or even summer school. What can I do to help you get started on your homework without reminders?)

Module 2: Active Listening Discussion Question

Active listening can help you build trust in your parent-child relationship, can help you better understand what your child needs, and can help you find solutions together. Active listening can also prevent or diffuse conflicts.

The Parent Toolkit in this section contains a resource that outlines four steps to help you actively listen to your adolescent. The four steps are as follows:

1. Be present and limit distractions.

2. Listen with intent.

3. Withhold judgment.

4. Paraphrase what was said.

[Optional]: Display _Active Listening_ resource from the Parent Toolkit

_____ Was anyone able to practice active listening with their child this week?

_____ How did you feel when conversing with your child while using active listening?

_____ How did your child respond?

_____ Did you find any of the steps to be easier or more challenging than others?

Module 2: Impact vs. Intention Discussion Question

Module 2 shares multiple examples of parent statements, information regarding the parent's intent, and explanations for how the phrase that was spoken may have impacted the child. When you are communicating with your adolescent, sometimes, what you mean – your intent – and what your child hears – the impact – are two different things.

_____ You were asked to think about a recent conversation with your child in which you may have said something that was not received the way in which you intended. Does anyone want to share about their experience?

_____ How could you have said it better?

_____ What impact do you think the revised statement might have had on your child?

Step 4: Assign Homework (5 minutes)

Ask your participants to complete the following Branch Out online modules before your next meeting:

- Module 3: Developmental Milestones
- Module 4: Mental Health

Completing these modules includes preparing answers to the questions listed in their *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* under Step 3: Prepare Community Building Activities/ Discussion Questions.

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 3

Discussion of Module 3 and 4

Developmental Milestones and Mental Health

Meeting *(60 minutes)*

Homework *(60 minutes)*

Overview

Step 1: [Optional] Reintroduction

Step 2: [Optional] Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Assign Homework

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 3 should be scheduled *at least 1 week after Meeting 2*. This timing allows your families 1 week to review the content and resources for Modules 3 and 4 and practice some of the strategies that are shared.

Step 1: [Optional] Allow Families an Opportunity to Reintroduce Themselves   *(5 minutes)*

If a reintroduction is not needed, consider doing a fun or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting section, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during Meeting 1 or Meeting 2.

Step 2: [Optional] Restate the Ground Rules   *(5 minutes)*

Use your professional judgment and new skills learned through the Facilitator Training. Is there a need to restate or revisit the ground rules based on the outcomes of Meeting 2?

Ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion   *(45 minutes)*

During Meeting 3, discuss these questions as a group.

Module 3: Physical, Emotional, and Mental Changes Discussion Questions

One of the most significant milestones that all adolescents experience is puberty. Every child is unique and will develop on their own timeline. These changes can take up to 4 years to complete!

_____ Think about your own experience as you went through puberty. What conversations did you have, or wish you would have had, with your parent or caregiver about how your body was changing?

_____ How do you want your child to feel about their own experience?

Adolescents experience multiple emotional changes as they develop, and these may include aggression, cognitive changes, depression, low self-esteem, and mood swings. Complex feelings and emotions may arise as they become interested in romantic relationships, build independence, and explore their own identity.

_____ How can you support your child through the array of feelings and challenging emotional changes they may experience?

Module 4: The Importance of Your Child's Mental Health Discussion Questions

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act. Module 4 describes children with good mental health as children who can do the following: interact positively with family members and friends, meet and achieve educational milestones, and actively participate in their community.

_____ In which of the areas do you feel your child is currently experiencing success?

_____ Are there areas in which your child may be struggling or in which they could benefit from additional support?

Module 4: Early Warning Signs Discussion Questions

Module 4 shares a list of potential risks for mental health problems and early warning signs. You were asked to review the list and consider whether your child may be exhibiting any of the behaviors listed. Although we will not discuss your thoughts here, the following resources are available to you for further exploration:

Local resources available to parents who may be concerned about their child's behaviors:

[Note to Facilitator]: Prepare a list of local resources to share with parents and caregivers.

- Local mental health hospital/facility numbers
- Military and Family Counselor (MFLC) contact information
- Military OneSource Non-Medical Counseling information
- SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

One of the first steps parents can take if they are worried about their teen's mental health is to talk to the child about their emotions, feelings, and behaviors in a nonconfrontational way. Talking to the other adults in your child's life, such as your child's school counselor, pediatrician, or spiritual leader, can also be important.

_____ Were you able to list adults in your child's life whom you can check in with about your child's mental health?

_____ Who is on your list - teachers, coaches, youth group leaders, family members?

_____ Did anyone try to check in with any of these individuals regarding their child this week?

_____ Would anyone like to share their experience?

As a parent, you can help your child feel happy and positive about themself. Module 4 lists examples of ways in which you can support your child's mental health:

- show love and affection,
- spend undistracted or focused time with your child,
- encourage your child to talk with you about their feelings,
- be interested in what's happening in your child's life,
- encourage your child to engage in physical activity,
- provide your child with nutritious foods, and
- encourage your child to get enough sleep.

_____ Which of these examples do you practice often with your child?

_____ How would you like to show, or offer, more mental health support to your child?

Step 4: Assign Homework (5 minutes)

Ask your participants to complete the following Branch Out Online modules:

- Module 5: Working Together and Growing as a Family
- Module 6: Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth

Completing these modules includes preparing answers to the questions listed in their *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* under Meeting 4, Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions.

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 4

4

Discussion of Module 5 and 6

Working Together and Growing as a Family and

Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth

Meeting *(60 minutes)*

Homework *(60 minutes)*

Overview

Step 1: [Optional] Icebreaker

Step 2: [Optional] Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Assign Homework

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 4 should be scheduled *at least 1 week after Meeting 3*. This timing allows your families 1 week to review the content and resources for Modules 5 and 6 and practice some of the strategies that are shared.

Step 1: [Optional] Icebreaker   *(5 minutes)*

Consider doing a fun or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during Meetings 1 through 3

Step 2: [Optional] Restate the Ground Rules   *(5 minutes)*

Use your professional judgment based on Meeting 3.

Ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion   *(35 minutes)*

During Meeting 4, discuss these questions as a group.

Module 5: Developmental Assets Activity

Research shows that when a child has strong developmental assets, they are more likely to get good grades and do well in school, to positively contribute and be actively involved in the community, and to recognize and understand the differences between people and value diversity. They are also less likely to encounter problems with alcohol use, engage in violence, partake in illicit drug use, and participate in sexually risky behaviors.

[Optional]: Display the *Developmental Assets Tip Sheet* from the Parent Toolkit.

You were asked to select one internal asset and one external asset that you would like to focus on with your child.

_____   What assets did you select?

_____   What actions have you taken, or do you plan to take, to support your child in developing that asset?

? Module 5: Family Meetings Discussion Question and Activity

One way to provide a supportive environment for your child is to establish a routine of holding family meetings. Family meetings are a safe way for children to discuss topics and concerns openly with their parents, and they offer opportunities for parents to learn more about each family member's needs and desires.

_____   Does your family regularly hold family meetings? If so, what does your family meeting look like (e.g., who attends, how often do you hold the meetings, what topics do you discuss)?

_____   For those of you who are new to family meetings, did you try holding one or more? What topics did you discuss? How did your family members react to the meeting? Will you continue to hold family meetings in the future?

? Module 5: Planning for Family Time Discussion Questions

Spending planned quality time with your child promotes an emotionally healthy parent-child attachment and models good behaviors for your child as they form friendships and romantic relationships.

_____   How do you typically plan for family activities?

_____   Do you involve your child and your family in the planning process?

_____ What does that process look like?

_____ Did anyone plan for a new activity with their child or family this week?

_____ How did your child or your family react to being a part of the planning process?

_____ Were you able to develop a successful plan?

? Module 6: Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth Discussion Questions

Let's talk about friendships. Adolescence is a time when friendships become especially important, and your teen's friends can have a significant influence on their choices and behaviors. As friendships become a bigger part of your adolescent's life, your child may ask you more frequently if their friends can visit your home and if they can visit a friend's home. You will want to be prepared for these situations, so your adolescent knows your expectations for those visits. Let's do an exercise together.

Remember, in this module, you learned that for boundaries, limits, rules, and expectations to help children become successful adults, these restrictions and opportunities need to be developmentally appropriate.

For this exercise, think of a rule you have in your household that is related to your child having friends over at your home. For example, some families do not allow friends over when a parent is not home. Some families may require that a bedroom door remains open when friends are visiting.

- Raise your hand if your adolescent understands the rule.
- Raise your hand if your child was involved in the development of the rule.
- Raise your hand if the expectations of the rule can be met by your child.

_____ Would anyone like to share their rule or expectation regarding their child's friends visiting their home?

_____ How do you think this rule might change as your child gets older?

Module 6: Achievement Discussion Questions

All teens will have homework. Although many adolescents dread doing schoolwork at home, completing homework is important because it helps your child relearn information and retain what they are learning over longer periods of time.

This module outlines ways in which you can support your child as they complete homework.

_____ Does your child have a homework routine? What does it look like?

_____ What can you do to better support your child with their homework or overall feelings regarding school?

Module 6: Safety Discussion Questions

As adolescents build their social circles, they may be exposed to unsafe behaviors, or may even engage in behaviors that are known to have safety issues, such as risky driving and exposure to drugs and alcohol. Establishing rules to promote good choices and having discussions about the dangers of various topics are important because they can help keep your child safe and healthy.

_____ Have you spoken with your child about any of the safety issues addressed in this module?

_____ Have you developed any specific rules about any of these issues?

_____ If you have not had conversations or set rules regarding these safety issues, why haven't you?

_____ If you feel that some of these safety issues do not apply to your child (e.g., your child is still too young), when do you plan to have these conversations with your child?

_____ What safety-related rules might be beneficial for you to begin enforcing with your child?

[Optional]: Display the *Safe Driving Pledge* and *How to Talk to your Teen about Substance Abuse* resources from the Toolkit for guidance.

? Module 6: Independence and Decision-Making Discussion Questions

Learning to make appropriate and healthy decisions can help children establish independence and autonomy. Parents can help teens learn to be independent in emotional, behavioral, and values-based ways.

Remember, in Module 6, you learned that one of the ways you can help your teenager develop emotional autonomy is to ensure that your household has family cohesion. Family cohesion exists when there is warmth and affection, closeness, and support in family relationships.

Let's review some examples of family cohesion. Raise your hand if you feel your family is experiencing success with any of the following:

- Family members know each other's close friends.
- Family members enjoy spending some amount of their free time together.
- Family members know who in the household is responsible for specific roles and tasks.
- Family sets, and accomplishes, goals together.
- There are clear and consistent consequences when a family member breaks a rule.
- If someone has a problem, they know they can trust their family to help them resolve it.
- Family members can talk through disagreements and come to a positive resolution.

_____ What are some other examples of family cohesion in your family?

_____ Are there areas where you can improve your family cohesion?

_____ What action(s) can you initiate in the near future to improve your family cohesion?

Step 4: Assign Homework (5 minutes)

Ask your participants to complete the following Branch Out online modules before your next meeting:

- Module 7: Healthy Relationships and Sexuality
- Module 8: Technology in Family Life

Completing these modules includes preparing answers to the questions listed in their *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus* under Meeting 5, Step 3: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions.

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 5 [5]

Discussion of Module 7 and 8

Healthy Relationships and Sexuality and
Technology in Family Life

Meeting   *(60 minutes)*
Homework   *(60 minutes)*

Overview

Step 1: [Optional] Icebreaker

Step 2: [Optional] Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Assign Homework

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 5 should be scheduled *at least 1 one week after Meeting 4.* This timing allows your families 1 week to review the content and resources for Modules 7 and 8 and practice some of the strategies that are shared.

Step 1: [Optional] Icebreaker   *(5 minutes)*

Consider doing a fun or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during that meeting.

Step 2: [Optional] Restate the Ground Rules   *(5 minutes)*

Use your professional judgment and new skills learned through the Facilitator Training. Is there a need to restate or revisit the ground rules based on the outcomes of Meeting 4?

Ask if any rules need to be added or modified.

Step 3: Start Discussion   *(45-50 minutes)*

During Meeting 5, discuss these questions as a group.

? Module 7: Healthy Relationships Activity

One of the best ways for your child to have healthy relationships is for you to understand and model healthy relationships to them. Examples of positive behavior you could model follow:

- Use "I" statements when talking with your child.
- Give your teen your full attention when they are talking to you.
- Calmly and rationally talk through challenges with your child.
- When disagreeing with your teen, try to find a "middle ground" solution that both parties are comfortable with.
- Continually demonstrate that, for the most part, other human beings, regardless of differences, hold value and deserve respect.
- Discuss with others what behaviors you are comfortable and uncomfortable with.
- Show care and compassion and expect nothing in return.
- Own your mistakes, and discuss them with others.

[Optional]: Display the *Modeling Healthy Relationship Behavior* guide available in the Parent Toolkit.

You were encouraged to select one behavior from the list above to focus on for the week.

_____   What behavior did you choose?

_____   Did you notice anything different in your child's interactions with you?

? Module 7: Risky Behaviors in Teen Romantic Relationships Discussion Questions

Healthy relationships in the adolescent years can help promote trust and security, but they may also promote risk-taking behaviors and lead to other challenges. Module 7 introduces topics such as sexting, teen dating violence, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. Depending on your child's age and maturity, you may feel that you are years away from encountering these risks, or you may be navigating one or more of these challenges now.

____   Based on the information shared in the module, do you feel you are aware of the available resources that can help you provide guidance and support for your child in these areas?

____   If not, in what areas would you like additional support?

[Note to Facilitator]: Prepare a list of resources for parents. Suggested resources are listed below.

Healthy Relationships and Sexuality resources from the Parent Toolkit:

• Credible Resources for Teen Relationships and Teen Domestic Violence

• Ways Parents Can Influence the Health of LGBTQ+ Youth

• Credible Resources for Your Teen Sex, Pregnancy, and STDs

Local Resources:

• Suggestions may include school professionals, installation programs and professionals, community programs and professionals.

Module 7: How to Talk to Your Child About Sex, STDs, and Identifying as LGBTQ+ Discussion Questions

Having ongoing open and honest discussions about relationships, sex, and associated risks with your teen is extremely important. These discussions can help your child stay safe and grow into a confident, caring, and compassionate adult. Although these conversations can be difficult, it is critical that you to talk with your child early and often.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some factors that can make a difference as you talk with your teen about matters related to sex and relationships include the following:

- **HOW** you talk about it
- **HOW OFTEN** you talk about it
- If the **TEEN FEELS they are IMPORTANT and LOVED by their parents**, and
- **WHAT** is said

_____ Think about your conversations, or lack of conversations, about sex and the associated risks with your own parent or caregiver when you were an adolescent. What impact did these conversations, or lack of them, have on you?

_____ If relevant, what were the positive take-aways from these conversations?

_____ What would you say or do differently in your conversations with your child?

_____ Have you had conversations with your adolescent about sex and associated risks? Why or why not?

_____ What topics or information might be helpful for you to discuss in future conversations with your child?

Multiple resources are available in the Parent Toolkits throughout this module to help parents and caregivers navigate these difficult and important topics.

[Optional]: Encourage parents to explore the following resources from the Parent Toolkit. If possible, have printed versions available for participants to take home.

Module 7:

- Modeling Healthy Relationships
- Parental Self Care
- Credible Resources for Teen Relationships and Teen Domestic Violence
- Ways Parents Can Influence the Health of LGBTQ+ Youth
- Credible Resources for Your Teen Sex, Pregnancy, and STDs
- Preventing Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Module 8:

- Acronyms and Teen Codes
- Tips for Online Safety at Home
- Talking Tips to Protect your Child from Online Predators and Grooming
- Screen Time Recommendations
- Physical Activity Guidelines
- Resources to Navigate Appropriate Media
- Harmful Digital Footprint Impacts
- Parent Guide: Internet Safety
- Safety and Social Media
- Internet Safety Pledge
- Helping Kids Fight Cyberbullying
- Tips to Assist with Cyberbullying
- Respectful Communication for Pre-Teens and Teens
- Teaching Teens about Hate Speech

Module 8: Technology in Family Life Discussion Questions

Remember, in Module 8, you learned that the appropriate use of technology and digital media can positively affect adolescent self-image; peer engagement; aspirational, career engagement; and entrepreneurial spirit. However, it also comes with risks such as obesity, sleep disturbances, isolation, and exposure to inappropriate content. Using technology and digital media can also increase your child's potential for forming inappropriate relationships or becoming the target of grooming.

_____   How is your child engaging with technology?

_____   Did you speak with your child about their digital use to better understand how, why, and when they're using technology?

_____   Were you surprised to find out how they're using it or how much time they spend on their devices?

_____   What safeguards do you have in place to protect against negative situations that may arise out of digital media use?

   o Safeguards may include setting screen-time limits, putting screens down - or turning them off - during family dinner time, storing screens overnight in a common area like the kitchen, and/or encouraging your child to participate in physical activity each day.

_____   Now that you are aware of the potential risks of digital media, what additional safeguards, actions, or conversations could you incorporate into your family's interactions with and use of technology?

Module 8: Family Media Plan

Family Media Plans are a great way to negotiate expectations and rules and set goals.

_____ Does your family have a Family Media Plan?

_____ How is this plan working for you and your family?

_____ After completing Module 8, are you interested in creating a Family Media Plan?

_____ How do you think this plan will impact your family's use of digital technology?

Module 8: Bullying Discussion Questions

Parents need to be aware of the possibility that their child may be bullied (or may be bullying) and the effects the child may experience because of the bullying. Bullying, like many other youth topics, should be openly discussed with your child.

_____ Have you had conversations with your child about bullying?

_____ What did you discuss, and how did your child respond?

• If, after reviewing the bullying warning signs shared in Module 8, you have any concerns about your child, please consider reaching out for additional support.

[Optional]: Display the following bullying warning signs shared in Module 8:

Warning Signs of Cyberbullying:
- The child suddenly wants to stop using social media on any type of device.
- The child wants to avoid school or other activities.
- The child wants to hide their social media from you.
- The child refuses to meet the requirements of the family contract (requirements they met before).
- The child seems to have increased anxiety or depression.
- The child has changes in their mood, behavior, sleep, or appetite.
- The child seems nervous or jumpy after getting an instant message, text, or email and avoids discussions about computer or phone activities.

CDC Warning Signs Your Child May be Bullied:
- Unexplainable injuries. Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches or feeling sick or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem. Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

CDC Warning Signs Your Child May Be Bullying Others:
- Gets into physical or verbal fights.
- Has friends who bully others.
- Is increasingly aggressive.
- Is sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently.
- Has unexplained extra money or new belongings.
- Blames others for their problems.
- Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions.
- Is competitive and worries about their reputation or popularity.

⚠ **Safety Alert!**

Potential support may be found from teachers, school counselors, and school administrators. If your child is in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line **(text HELLO to 741741)**. Both services are free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All calls are confidential. **If it is an emergency contact 911 immediately.**

[Optional]: Share additional local resources if applicable.

Step 4: Assign Homework (5 minutes)

Ask your participants to complete the Wrap-Up.

Encourage your participants to visit the Thrive website to see if there is another program they may want to complete for another child or to plan for the next step with the child they focused on during Branch Out.

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 6 **6**

Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing Meeting *(45 minutes)*

Overview

Step 1: [Optional] Icebreaker

Step 2: Start Discussion

Step 3: Register for Next Thrive Program

Step 4: Thank and Adjourn

Meeting 6 should be scheduled *1 week after Meeting 5.* This scheduling keeps the meeting intervals consistent, allows your participants time to focus on the goals they set during Branch Out, and gives them time to reflect on their progress. This meeting serves to wrap up the content and provide additional resources as needed.

Step 1: [Optional] Icebreaker *(5 minutes)*

Consider doing a fun or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during any previous meetings.

Step 2: Start Discussion *(40 minutes)*

Here are some questions and prompts you can use to facilitate discussion.

Wrap-Up Module Discussion Questions
Summary Questions

_____ Which topic discussed in Branch Out was the most beneficial to you as a parent? Why?

_____ You were introduced to multiple families throughout Branch Out, and each family encountered a different challenging situation or developmental milestone. Which family or families' situation did you most relate to and why?

_____ What strategies or skills did you learn in Branch Out that will help you achieve the goals you have for your family?

_____ Has anything changed about your interactions with your child since we started?

_____   Do you notice a difference in the way you respond to your child's behaviors?

_____   Do you notice a difference in the way your child responds to you?

_____   Would anyone like to share a moment when they used a strategy learned in Branch Out and discuss how their current reaction compares to how they may have reacted prior to engaging in Branch Out training?

_____   What was different? How did your child respond?

What's Next?

For an in-depth exploration of specified topics related to teens and adolescents, suggest families visit the Thrive website (https://thrive.psu.edu/supplemental-modules/), and review the supplemental module content for the most up-to-date offerings.

If your participants have multiple children, tell them about the following:

- Take Root is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 0 and 3 years old.

- Sprout is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 3 and 5 years old.

- Grow is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 5 and 10 years old.

Step 3: Register for the next Thrive Program

As the facilitator, provide support and encouragement to your participants to explore other Thrive programming. Share any additional hybrid implementation options with your participants at this time.

Step 4: Thank and Adjourn

Thank your parents and caregivers for their participation. Encourage them to continue to visit the Thrive website, https://thrive.psu.edu, as their child develops and grows.

Appendices

Appendix A

Branch Out Recruitment Poster

thrive

branch out

A Universal Parenting Program for Parents and Caregivers of Children Who are 10 to 18 Years Old.

Gain knowledge, skills, and strategies in the following areas:

- positive parenting practices,
- stress management, and
- child physical-health promotion.

Learn more about Branch Out and other Thrive programs at:

https://thrive.psu.edu/

Meet with us!

Appendix B

Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

Branch Out Hybrid Implementation Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Participant Name	Email Address	Child's Date of Birth	Today's Date	Child's Calculated Age (Years)	Parent Welcome Letter - Date Sent	Thrive Account Registration Confirmed (Y/N)	Registration in Hybrid Implementation Confirmed (Y/N)	Parent Workbook and Syllabus Sent
Example, Participant	email@address.com	7/07/2005	5/04/2022	16 Years	4/30/22	Yes	Yes	☑

Branch Out Hybrid Implementation Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Participant Name	Email Address	Child's Date of Birth	Today's Date	Child's Calculated Age (Years)	Parent Welcome Letter - Date Sent	Thrive Account Registration Confirmed (Y/N)	Registration in Hybrid Implementation Confirmed (Y/N)	Parent Workbook and Syllabus Sent
Example, Participant	email@address.com	7/07/2005	5/04/2022	16 Years	4/130/22	Yes	Yes	☑

Instructions for Completing the Branch Out Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

The goal of this sheet is to track individuals who would like more information about the hybrid implementation of Branch Out and to provide information about the dates and times for meetings.

Download the Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

Ensure you are following your organization's privacy protocols with all of the information that you collect and store. You can complete this form on a computer or print it and handwrite your responses. You may also choose to move the data to a spreadsheet.

Complete Columns 1-4

- Enter the potential participant's name, email address, child's date of birth, and today's date.

- If the potential participant has multiple children, enter the date of birth for the focal child (i.e., the child whom the participant is focusing on with Branch Out).

Complete Columns 5 [Optional]

Complete Columns 6-8

- Send the *Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter* to the email address provided, and enter the date the letter is sent.

  o By sending the *Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter*, you'll provide the potential participant with the information they need to make a decision about attending the hybrid implementation, such as the date, time, and location of meetings. The letter also provides information about how to create an account on the Thrive website.

- Encourage participants to create a Thrive account and enroll in Branch Out.

- Follow up with the potential participant to see if they would like to register and attend the hybrid implementation of Branch Out.

Complete Column 9

Send the *Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus.*

Appendix C

Branch Out Parent Welcome Letter

Overview of Thrive Initiative

Thrive is a group of parenting programs that are designed to help you, a parent or caregiver, as you care for your child—from pregnancy until your child reaches 18 years of age. There are four online parenting programs that are part of the Thrive Initiative.

Thrive Initiative Program Areas			
Universal Parenting Programs			
Take Root	Sprout	Grow	Branch Out
Infants **(0 to 6 months)**	**Preschool** **(3 to 5 years)**	**Grades K–5** **(5 to 10 years)**	**Grades 6–12** **(10 to 18 years)**
Infants **(6 to 12 months)**			
Infants & Toddlers **(1 to 3 years)**			

All Thrive programs share knowledge, skills, and strategies within three areas:

- positive parenting practices,
- stress management, and
- child physical-health promotion

Branch Out Online – *Branch Out online is for parents and caregivers of children who are 10 to 18 years old.* The online Branch Out program consists of 8 modules and a Conclusion/Wrap Up module. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete each module.
The modules discuss the following:

- Overview
    - o Module 1 – Introduction
    - o Module 2 – Communication
    - o Module 3 – Developmental Milestones
    - o Module 4 – Mental Health
    - o Module 5 – Working Together and Growing as a Family
    - o Module 6 – Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth
    - o Module 7 – Healthy Relationships and Sexuality
    - o Module 8 – Technology and Family Life
- Conclusion/Wrap Up

Hybrid Implementation of Branch Out – *The hybrid implementation of Branch Out means you will complete the program based on a schedule. After you complete the assigned modules, you will meet with a facilitator and, possibly, other families to discuss the information from the modules.*

There are six meetings with a facilitator. Each meeting will range from 45-60 minutes.

Expectations

You will be asked to independently participate in online modules of Branch Out and come to meetings ready for discussion. By completing the modules and activities and answering provided questions, you will be prepared to engage in discussion regarding the content, ask additional questions, and learn from other parents and caregivers and their experiences.

How to Create a Thrive Account

- Visit https://thrive.psu.edu/ ➔ Navigate to "For Parents" ➔ Go to "Register for THRIVE online" ➔ Click "Sign Up."
- Enter your name, create a username and password, and share your military affiliation (Yes/No).
- Log In ➔ Choose Branch Out, and then select "Start Course."

Still have Questions? Contact your Facilitator!

Branch Out Facilitator's Name

Phone Number/Email

The Thrive Initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Defense's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (DoD MC&FP) and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse).
All programs are available free of charge.

Appendix D

Branch Out Parent Workbook and Syllabus

branch out

Parent Workbook and Syllabus

CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

Summary of Training

Use this summary to keep track of your homework due dates and the meeting dates, times, and location.

Registration

Due Date	

Meeting 1: Intake *(Meeting: 45 min / Homework: 60 min)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Complete Modules 1 and 2 of Branch Out Online
Due Date	

Meeting 2: Discussion of Modules 1 and 2 *(Meeting: 60 min / Homework: 60 min)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Complete Modules 3 and 4 of Branch Out Online
Due Date	

Meeting 3: Discussion of Modules 3 and 4 *(Meeting: 60 min / Homework: 60 min)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Complete Modules 5 and 6 of Branch Out Online
Due Date	

Meeting 4: Discussion of Modules 5 and 6 *(Meeting: 60 min / Homework: 60 min)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Complete Modules 7 and 8 of Branch Out Online
Due Date	

Meeting 5: Discussion of Modules 7 and 8   *(Meeting: 60 min / Homework: 15 min)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Wrap-Up Branch Out Online
Due Date	

Meeting 6: Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing   *(Meeting: 45 min)*

Date	
Time	

Registration

If you have not done so already, complete these steps prior to Meeting 1.

Step 1: Create a Thrive Account

- Visit https://thrive.psu.edu/

- Navigate to "For Parents."

- Go to "Register for THRIVE online."

- Click "Sign Up."

- Enter your name, create a username and password, and share your military affiliation (Yes/No).

- An automated email will be sent to you that tells you that you now have an active username and password. Keep that email for your records.

Step 2: Choose Branch Out

- Log In → Navigate to Course Catalog in the upper right-hand corner → Choose Branch Out.

- Click "Start Course" to begin, and review the Branch Out Overview. After you have reviewed the overview video and chosen Branch Out, you can expect to do the following:

  o Read a welcome statement, and learn the goals of Branch Out.

  o Decide if you would like to consent to complete assessments throughout the program for research purposes.

  o Complete introductory assessments if consent was provided.

Meeting 1 ①

Intake   *45 minutes*
Homework   *30 minutes*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	

Step 1: Attend Meeting

Meeting Events
- Test your video or audio (if meeting virtually).
- Introduce yourself and your family members.
- Engage in an icebreaker.
- Create ground rules.
- Register for a Thrive account – https://thrive.psu.edu/ (if not registered already).
- Complete any required paperwork.

Step 2: Complete Homework [For discussion in Meeting 2]

_____ Complete Module 1: Introduction

_____ Complete Module 2: Communication

_____ Review and download from the Parent Toolkit, if desired, the resources for Session 1

     o   Positive Conversations Refrigerator Card

     o   Active Listening

_____ Prepare to discuss the topics addressed in Modules 1 and 2 during the _next meeting_ by answering the questions in Step 3: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the discussion, note them in Step 4.

Step 3: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Use the blue boxes on the next few pages to prepare your responses for the *next meeting.* During the *Meeting 2* group discussion, you can use the magenta boxes to record your notes.

As you complete these questions and activities, recognize that changes will not happen overnight. You will need to use the strategies and skills learned throughout Branch Out consistently in your everyday life to see the desired changes in your child's reactions or behaviors. Keep practicing.

When you meet as a group, share and celebrate the small, short-term positive changes you see with your child, and consider what the long-term benefits may be with continued use of the skills and strategies you are learning with Branch Out!

_____ **Module 1: Introduction**

Module 2: Daily Check-In Discussion Questions

One way to make the adolescent years more enjoyable and less stressful for you and your child is to intentionally create an environment that promotes trust and communication. You can encourage communication by using a daily check-in.

Do you practice daily check-ins with your child? If so, what topics do you discuss? If you have not used daily check-ins, think about how a daily check-in could enhance your communication with your child.

Group discussion notes.

Meeting 1

Select a day this week to try out a daily check-in with your child. Use the Daily Agenda template in the module as a guide. You can save the template and refer back to it if needed. You may also use the space below to plan your daily check-in.

Group discussion notes:

? **Reflect on the daily check-in. How did your child respond? What are the potential benefits your family might experience by incorporating a daily check-in into your household routine?**

Group discussion notes:

Module 2: Create an Environment that Encourages Open Communication Discussion Questions

? Module 2 describes additional strategies you can use to create an environment that promotes trust and communication such as planned family activities; rituals; and routines, like family meals, Friday movie nights, and family hikes.

Make a list of activities your family does together. Are there any new or additional activities you would like to start doing together as a family?
Put a star next to the activities you would like your family to participate in more.

Group discussion notes:

Module 2: Establishing Boundaries Discussion Questions

Trust within communication is very important - especially to an adolescent. As a parent, you may increase the likelihood that your child will discuss difficult topics with you if they understand and are comfortable with the boundaries you establish regarding your conversations. Confidentiality is one boundary that is addressed in the module.

- Have you discussed your confidentiality boundaries with your child? If so, is your child aware of the steps that will be followed if you need to break confidentiality? Do they understand the reason for and the importance of breaking that confidentiality?

Group discussion notes:

? Think about the rules you have established in your home. Are there rules in your house that you consider "non-negotiable"? What is your reasoning behind those rules?

💬 *Group discussion notes:*

Module 2: Positive Communication Discussion Questions and Activity

? I-statements are a great way to start a conversation in a positive manner. Think about a recent statement you made to your child that was NOT well-received. Rephrase that statement into an I-statement using the following formula:

I (Emotion)------when (Behavior)----- I (How the Behavior Affects Me)…..and I Need (Requested Behavior).

How do you think the conversation could have been different if you had used the I-statement instead? If you are having difficulty rephrasing the sentence, write what you said in the space below, and consider sharing the statement at next week's meeting.

Group discussion notes:

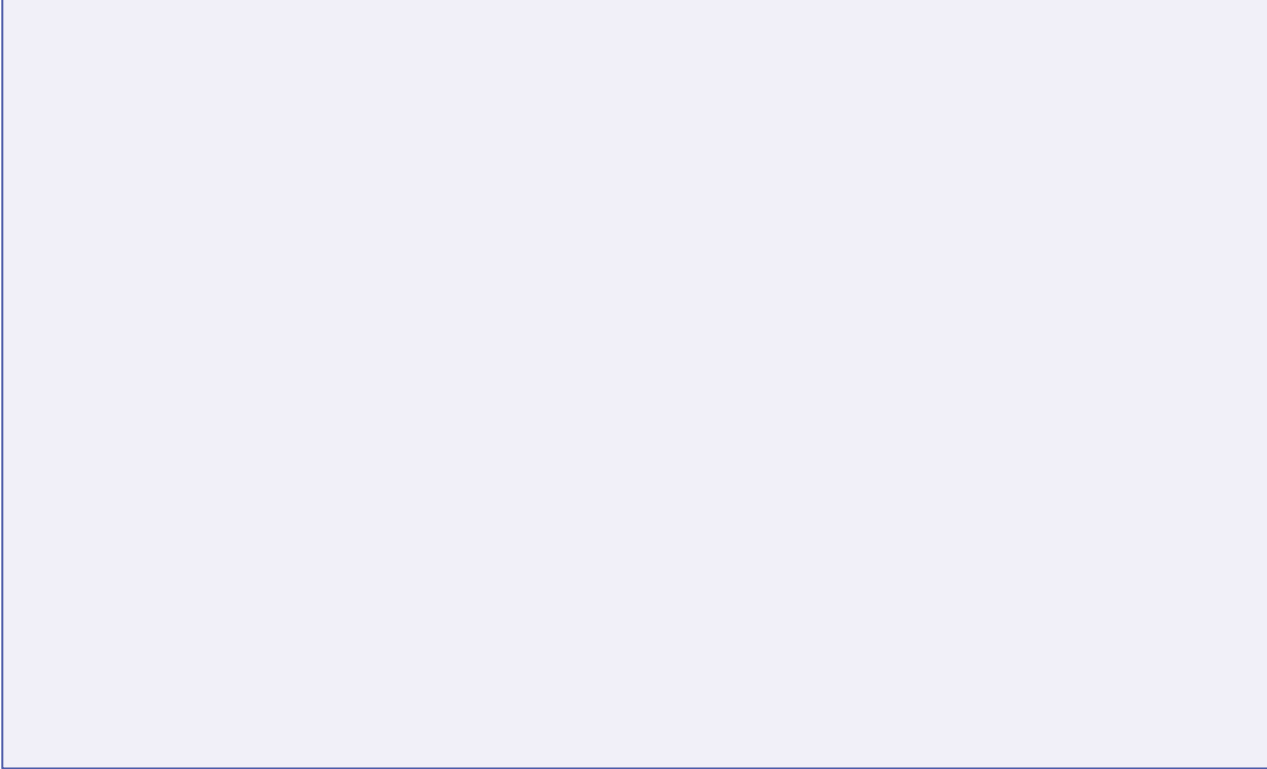## Module 2: Positive Communication Activity

Read through the parent sentences below and rephrase each sentence using an I-Statement. Refer to the I-Statement formula for assistance.

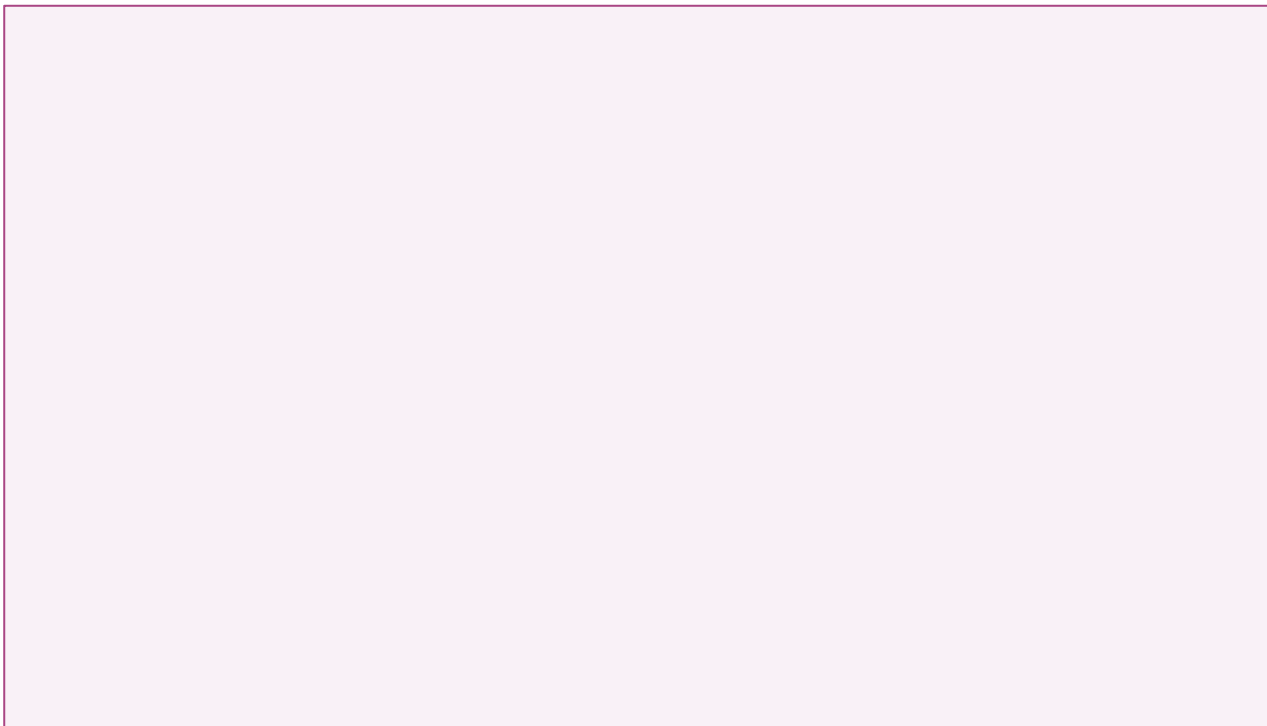1. Your room is such a mess! Why can't you clean up after yourself?

Group discussion notes:

2. Hurry up! We are always waiting on you to get out the door.

Group discussion notes:

3. How many times do I need to remind you to do your homework?

Group discussion notes:

Module 2: Active Listening Discussion Questions

Active listening can help you build trust in your parent-child relationship, can help you better understand what your child needs, and can help you find solutions together. Active listening can also prevent or diffuse conflicts.

Select a time this week when you will practice actively listening to your child. Refer to the *Active Listening* handout in the Parent Toolkit for reference to the four key steps. Reflect on this experience. How did you feel when conversing with your child while using active listening? How did your child respond? Did you find any of the steps to be easier or more challenging than others?

Group discussion notes:

Module 2: Impact vs. Intention Discussion Questions

Intention is what you are trying to say. Impact is what the other person hears. Module 2 shares multiple examples of parent statements, information regarding the parent's intent, and explanations for how the phrase that was spoken may have impacted the child.

Think about your recent conversations with your child. Is there something you could have phrased differently to more accurately relay your intent? Write your initial statement and intent in the space below. Then, rephrase the statement to "say it better." What impact do you think the revised statement might have had on your child?

Group discussion notes:

Step 4: Prepare Additional Questions for Meeting 2

Note any additional questions you may have for the group or the facilitator.

Group discussion notes:

Meeting 2

2

Discussion of Module 1 and 2

Introduction and
Communication

Meeting *(60 minutes)*

Homework *(60 minutes)*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	

Step 1: Attend Meeting

Step 2: Discuss Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Return to *Meeting 1, Step 3: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions*. Discuss the activities and questions as a group. What new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting? Note them in the magenta boxes under your responses.

To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after Meeting 1.

Step 3: Complete Homework [For discussion in Meeting 3]

_____ Complete Module 3: Developmental Milestones

_____ Complete Module 4: Mental Health

_____ Prepare to discuss the topics addressed in Modules 3 and 4 during the *next meeting* by answering the questions in Step 4. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the discussion, note them in Step 5.

Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Use the blue boxes on the next few pages to prepare your responses for the *next meeting.* During the *Meeting 3* group discussion, you can use the magenta boxes to record your notes.

As you complete these questions and activities, recognize that changes will not happen overnight. You will need to use the strategies and skills learned throughout Branch Out consistently in your everyday life to see the desired changes in your child's reactions or behaviors. Keep practicing.

When you meet as a group, share and celebrate the small, short-term positive changes you see with your child, and consider what the long-term benefits may be with continued use of the skills and strategies you are learning with Branch Out!

Module 3: Physical, Emotional, and Mental Changes Discussion Questions

One of the most significant milestones that all adolescents experience is puberty. Every child is unique and will develop on their own timeline. These changes can take up to 4 years to complete!

Think about your own experience as you went through puberty. What conversations did you have, or wish you would have had, with your parent or caregiver about how your body was changing? How do you want your child to feel about their own experience?

Group discussion notes:

Adolescents experience multiple emotional changes as they develop that may include the following:

- Aggression
- Cognitive changes
- Depression
- Low self-esteem, and
- Mood swings

Think about the emotional changes that you may have seen in your child in recent months. How can you support your child through the challenging emotional changes they may experience?

Group discussion notes:

Module 3: Older Teens Discussion Questions

? Older teens go through several changes as they learn more about themselves. Complex feelings and emotions arise as they become interested in romantic relationships, build independence, and explore their own identity. Think about the changes you have noticed in your child. What supports can you offer your child as they experience these feelings and emotions and navigate these changes?

Group discussion notes:

Module 4: The Importance of Your Child's Mental Health
Discussion Questions

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act. Children with good mental health can do the following:

- interact positively with family members and friends,
- meet and achieve educational milestones, and
- actively participate in their community.

In which of the areas listed above do you feel your child is currently experiencing success? Are there areas in which your child may be struggling or in which they could benefit from additional support?

Group discussion notes:

Module 4: Early Warning Signs Discussion Questions

You were introduced to a list of potential risks for mental health problems and early warning signs. After reviewing this list, consider whether your child is exhibiting any of the mentioned behaviors. Are any of these behaviors creating a concern for you?

Group discussion notes:

One of the first steps parents can take if they are worried about their teen's mental health is to *talk to the child about their emotions, feelings, and behaviors in a nonconfrontational way.* Talking to the other adults in your child's life, such as your child's school counselor, pediatrician, or spiritual leader, can also be important.

Make a list of the other adults in your child's life whom you can check in with to get a full picture of your child's mental health. Bonus: Put a star next to one adult from your list. Make an effort to check in with this individual about your child this week. You could initiate a phone call, email, or in-person visit.

Group discussion notes:

As a parent, you can help your child feel happy and positive about themselves. Module 4 lists the following examples:

Put a star (★) next to the things you do now. Circle (○) the examples from the list below that you would like to practice with your child.

- Show love and affection
- Spend undistracted or focused time with your child
- Encourage your child to talk with you about their feelings
- Be interested in what's happening in your child's life

- Encourage your child to engage in physical activity (you could join them in a run or walk through a neighborhood park!!)
- Provide your child with nutritious foods
- Encourage your child to get enough sleep

How would you like to show, or offer, more mental health support to your child? Select one example from the list above to practice with your child this week.

Group discussion notes:

Step 5: Prepare Additional Questions for Meeting 3

Note any additional questions you may have for the group or the facilitator.

Group discussion notes:

Meeting 3 **3**

Discussion of Module 3 and 4
Developmental Milestones
and Mental Health

Meeting *(60 minutes)*
Homework *(60 minutes)*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	

Step 1: Attend Meeting

Step 2: Discuss Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Return to Meeting 2, Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions. Discuss the activities and questions as a group. What new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting? Note them in the magenta boxes under your responses.

To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after Meeting 2.

Step 3: Complete Homework [For discussion in Meeting 4]

_____ Complete Module 5: Working Together and Growing as a Family

_____ Review, and download, if desired, the resources for Module 5

- The Importance of Positive Self-Image
- Developmental Assets Tip Sheet
- Family Meeting Tip Sheet
- Family Meeting Action Plan
- Physical Activity Guidelines
- 5210 Monthly Challenge

_____ Complete Module 6: Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth

_____ Review, and download, if desired, the following resources for Module 6:

- Setting Boundaries and Expectations
- Safe Driving Pledge
- How to talk to your Teen about Substance Abuse
- Autonomy

_____ Prepare to discuss the topics addressed in Modules 5 and 6 during the _next meeting_ by answering the questions in Step 4. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the discussion, note them in Step 5.

Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Use the blue boxes on the next few pages to prepare your responses for the _next meeting._ During the _Meeting 4_ group discussion, you can use the magenta boxes to record your notes.

As you complete these questions and activities, recognize that changes will not happen overnight. You will need to use the strategies and skills learned throughout Branch Out consistently in your everyday life to see the desired changes in your child's reactions or behaviors. Keep practicing.

When you meet as a group, share and celebrate the small, short-term positive changes you see with your child, and consider what the long-term benefits may be with continued use of the skills and strategies you are learning with Branch Out!

Module 5: Developmental Assets Activity

? Research shows that when a child has strong developmental assets, they are more likely to get good grades and do well in school, to positively contribute and be actively involved in the community, and to recognize and understand the differences between people and value diversity. They are also less likely to encounter problems with alcohol use, engage in violence, partake in illicit drug use, and participate in sexually risky behaviors.

The *Developmental Assets Tip Sheet* in the Parent Toolkit lists internal and external assets and ways in which you can help your child develop each asset. Review the tip sheet. Select one internal asset and one external asset that you would like to focus on with your child this week. List the assets in the space below, and describe how you plan to provide support to your adolescent.

Group discussion notes:

Module 5: Family Meetings Discussion Questions and Activity

One way to provide a supportive environment for your child is to establish a routine of holding family meetings Family meetings are a safe way for children to discuss topics and concerns openly with their parents, and they offer opportunities for parents to learn more about each family member's needs and desires.

Does your family regularly hold family meetings? If so, what does your family meeting look like (e.g., who attends, how often do you hold the meetings, what topics do you discuss)? Is there anything you would like to add or change to your family meetings now that you've completed Module 5?

Group discussion notes:

If your family does not currently hold family meetings, how do you think your family members would feel about implementing a routine family meeting into your household? What topics might you discuss?

Group discussion notes:

Select a day this week to hold a family meeting. Use the space below to note the time, date, and agenda. Use the *Family Meeting Tip Sheet* in the Parent Toolkit section of Module 5 for additional information and guideline suggestions.

Group discussion notes:

Module 5: Planning for Family Time Discussion Questions

❓ Spending planned quality time with your child promotes an emotionally healthy parent-child attachment and models good behaviors for your child as they form friendships and romantic relationships.

How do you typically plan for family activities? Do you involve your child and your family in the planning process? What does that process look like?

💬 *Group discussion notes:*

? Every child needs time, attention, and affection from parents and other caring adults to feel a sense of significance and belonging. Invite your child to help you plan a family activity to do together this week. How did your child or your family react to being a part of the planning process? Were you able to develop a successful plan?

Group discussion notes:

Module 6: Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth
Discussion Questions

Adolescence is a time when friendships become especially important, and your teen's friends can be a big influence on their choices and behaviors. As friendships become a bigger part of your adolescent's life, your child may ask you more frequently if their friends can visit your home and if they can visit a friend's home. You will want to be prepared for these situations, so your adolescent knows your expectations for those visits.

This module shares that for boundaries, limits, rules, and expectations to help children become successful adults, these restrictions and opportunities need to be developmentally appropriate.

What rules do you have in your household that are related to your child having friends over at your home? For example, some families do not allow friends over when a parent is not home. Some families may require that a bedroom door remains open when friends are visiting.

Group discussion notes:

Put a star (★) next to the rule for each of the following guidelines it meets below:

- **Your adolescent understands the rule.**
- **Your child was involved in the development of the rule.**
- **The expectations of the rule can be met by your child.**

Based on what you have reviewed in Module 6, is there anything about the rule that can be improved? Some factors you may want to consider follow:

1. **Is the rule clear and concise?**

2. **Are your expectations for your child realistic for their age, maturity, and ability?**

3. **Do you state the "why" for the rule?**

4. **Is the rule still relevant for your child based on your family's current circumstances?**

5. **Can you appropriately monitor and enforce this rule with the way in which it is currently stated?**

Use the area below to rephrase your rule if needed.

Group discussion notes:

? **How do you think this rule might change as your child gets older?**

Group discussion notes:

Module 6: Achievement Discussion Questions

? All teens will have homework. Although many adolescents dread doing schoolwork at home, completing homework is important because it helps your child relearn information and retain what they are learning over longer periods of time.

This module outlines ways in which you can support your child as they complete homework. Does your child have a homework routine? What does it look like? You may consider talking with your child to learn more about their approach to homework or overall feelings regarding school.

Group discussion notes:

? What could you do to better support your child with their homework or overall feelings regarding school? Refer to the *Tips for Homework Engagement* and green boxes in the module for suggestions. You may also consider talking with your child to gather additional input and insight.

Group discussion notes:

Module 6: Safety Discussion Questions

As adolescents build their social circles, they may be exposed to unsafe behaviors, or may even engage in behaviors that are known to have safety issues, such as risky driving and exposure to drugs and alcohol. Establishing rules to promote good choices and having discussions about the dangers of various topics are important because they can help keep your child safe and healthy.

Have you spoken with your child about any of the safety issues addressed in this module? Have you developed any specific rules about any of these issues? If you have not had conversations or set rules regarding these safety issues, why haven't you?

Group discussion notes:

? If you feel that some of these safety issues do not apply to your child (e.g., your child is still too young), when do you plan to have these conversations with your child? What safety-related rules might be beneficial for you to begin enforcing with your child? Use the *Safe Driving Pledge* and *How to talk to your Teen about Substance Abuse* resources from the Toolkit for guidance.

Group discussion notes:

Module 6: Independence and Decision-Making Discussion Questions

? Learning to make appropriate and healthy decisions can help children establish independence and autonomy. Parents can help teens learn to be independent in emotional, behavioral, and values-based ways. One of the ways to help your teenager develop emotional autonomy is to ensure that your household has family cohesion. Family cohesion exists when there is warmth and affection, closeness, and support in family relationships.

Review the following examples of family cohesion. Put a star (★) next to the examples in which you feel your family is experiencing success. Circle the examples you feel could be improved upon for your family.

- Family members know each other's close friends.

- Family members enjoy spending some amount of their free time together.

- Family members know who in the household is responsible for specific roles and tasks.

- Family sets, and accomplishes, goals together.

- There are clear and consistent consequences when a family member breaks a rule.

- If someone has a problem, they know they can trust their family to help them resolve it.

- Family members can talk through disagreements and come to a positive resolution.

What are some other examples of family cohesion in your family?

Group discussion notes:

? Select one example of family cohesion that you circled as needing improvement. What action can you initiate in the near future to improve this area?

Group discussion notes:

Step 5: Prepare Additional Questions for Meeting 4

? Note any additional questions you may have for the group or the facilitator.

💬 *Group discussion notes:*

Meeting 4 4

Discussion of Module 5 and 6
Working Together and Growing as a Family and
Setting Expectations and Encouraging Personal Growth

Meeting   *(60 minutes)*
Homework   *(60 minutes)*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	

Step 1: Attend Meeting

Step 2: Discuss Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Return to *Meeting 3, Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions*. Discuss the activities and questions as a group. What new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting? Note them in the magenta boxes under your responses.

To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after Meeting 3.

Step 3: Complete Homework [For discussion in Meeting 5]

_____ Complete Module 7: Healthy Relationships and Sexuality

_____ Review, and download, if desired, the resources for Module 7

- **Modeling Healthy Relationships**
- **Parental Self Care**
- **Credible Resources for Teen Relationships and Teen Domestic Violence**
- **Ways Parents Can Influence the Health of LGBTQ+ Youth**
- **Credible Resources for Your Teen Sex, Pregnancy, and STDs**
- **Preventing Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

_____ Complete Module 8: Technology in Family Life

_____ Review, and download, if desired, the resources for Module 8

- Acronyms and Teen Codes
- Tips for Online Safety at Home
- Talking Tips to Protect your Child from Online Predators and Grooming
- Screen Time Recommendations
- Physical Activity Guidelines
- Resources to Navigate Appropriate Media
- Harmful Digital Footprint Impacts
- Parent Guide: Internet Safety
- Safety and Social Media
- Internet Safety Pledge
- Helping Kids Fight Cyberbullying
- Tips to Assist with Cyberbullying
- Respectful Communication for Pre-Teens and Teens
- Teaching Teens about Hate Speech

_____ Prepare to discuss the topics addressed in Modules 7 and 8 during the _next meeting_ by answering the questions in Step 4. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the discussion, note them in Step 5.

Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Use the blue boxes on the next few pages to prepare your responses for the _next meeting_. During the _Meeting 5_ group discussion, you can use the magenta boxes to record your notes.

As you complete these questions and activities, recognize that changes will not happen overnight. You will need to use the strategies and skills learned throughout Branch Out consistently in your everyday life to see the desired changes in your child's reactions or behaviors. Keep practicing.

When you meet as a group, share and celebrate the small, short-term positive changes you see with your child, and consider what the long-term benefits may be with continued use of the skills and strategies you are learning with Branch Out!

Module 7: Healthy Relationships Activity

One of the best ways for your child to have healthy relationships is for you to understand and model healthy relationships to them. Examples of positive behavior you could model follow:

- Use "I" statements when talking with your child.
- Give your teen your full attention when they are talking to you.
- Calmly and rationally talk through challenges with your child.
- When disagreeing with your teen, try to find a "middle ground" solution that both parties are comfortable with.
- Continually demonstrate that, for the most part, other human beings, regardless of differences, hold value and deserve respect.
- Discuss with others what you are comfortable and uncomfortable with.
- Show care and compassion and expect nothing in return.
- Own your mistakes, and discuss them with others.

Put a star (★) next to the behaviors above that you currently model when interacting with your child. Circle the behaviors that may need to be improved. Write down any additional behaviors you feel might be good to model.

Review the list above and the *Modeling Healthy Relationship Behavior* guide available in the Parent Toolkit. Select one behavior from the list above to work on this week. Use the space below to reflect on this experience. Did you notice anything different in your child's interactions with you?

Group discussion notes:

Module 7: Risky Behaviors in Teen Romantic Relationships
Discussion Questions

? Healthy relationships in the adolescent years can help promote trust and security, but they may also promote risk-taking behaviors and lead to other challenges. Module 7 introduces topics such as sexting, teen dating violence, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. Depending on your child's age and maturity, you may feel that you are years away from encountering these risks, or you may be navigating one or more of these issues now.

Based on the information shared in the module, do you feel you are aware of the available resources that can help you provide guidance and support for your child in these areas? If not, in what areas would you like additional support?

Group discussion notes:

Module 7: How to Talk to Your Child About Sex, STDs, and Identifying as LGBTQ+ Discussion Questions

Having ongoing open and honest discussions about relationships, sex, and associated risks with your teen is extremely important. These discussions can help your child stay safe and grow into a confident, caring, and compassionate adult. Although these conversations can be difficult, it is critical that you to talk with your child early and often.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some factors that can make a difference as you talk with your teen about matters related to sex and relationships include the following:

- **HOW** you talk about it

- **HOW OFTEN** you talk about it

- If the **TEEN FEELS they are IMPORTANT and LOVED by their parents**, and

- **WHAT** is said

Think about your conversations, or lack of conversations, about sex and the associated risks with your parent or caregiver when you were an adolescent. What impact did these conversations have on you? If relevant, what were the positive take-aways from these conversations? What might you say or do differently in your conversations with your child?

Group discussion notes:

? Have you had conversations with your adolescent about sex and the associated risks? Why or why not? What topics or information would be helpful for you to discuss in future conversations with your child?

Group discussion notes:

? Multiple resources are available in the Parent Toolkit to help parents and caregivers navigate these difficult and important topics. In the space below, note the resource(s) that may be the most beneficial and relevant to you and your child. You may also choose to print or download the resource(s) for future reference.

Group discussion notes:

Module 8: Technology in Family Life Discussion Questions

Technology is a constantly evolving tool that is woven into modern life. With digital media platforms, like social media, videogames, and communication apps, there are many ways your child can connect with people across the world. With some guidance from you, technology can be a positive tool that helps your child engage with and learn to be a part of a larger world.

List the specific ways in which your child engages with technology. You may want to talk with your child to understand how, why, and when they're using technology each day.

Group discussion notes:

? In Module 8, you learn that the appropriate use of technology and digital media can positively affect adolescent self-image; peer engagement; aspirational, career engagement; and entrepreneurial spirit. However, it also comes with risks such as obesity, sleep disturbances, isolation, and exposure to inappropriate content. Using technology and digital media can also increase your child's potential for forming inappropriate relationships or becoming the target of grooming.

What safeguards do you have in place to protect against negative situations that may arise out of digital media use? Safeguards may include setting screen-time limits, putting screens down - or turning them off - during family dinner time, storing screens overnight in a common area like the kitchen, and/or encouraging your child to participate in physical activity each day.

Group discussion notes:

? Now that you are aware of the potential risks of digital media, what additional safeguards, actions, or conversations can you incorporate into your family's interactions with and use of technology? Refer to the many resources in the Parent Toolkits throughout Module 8 for guidance.

Group discussion notes:

Module 8: Family Media Plan Discussion Questions

? Family Media Plans are a great way to negotiate expectations and rules and set goals. Does your family have a Family Media Plan? How is this plan working for you and your family? If your family does not have a Family Media Plan, revisit Module 8 to create your plan. Your child can also be part of the development. You may choose to save and print the plan for future reference.

💬 *Group discussion notes:*

Module 8: Bullying Discussion Questions

? Parents need to be aware of the possibility that their child is may be bullied (or may be bullying) and the effects the child may experience because of the bullying. Bullying, like many other youth topics, should be openly discussed with your child.

Have you had conversations with your child about bullying? What did you discuss, and how did your child respond? If you have not had a conversation with your child about bullying, make a plan to talk with your child. Use the space below to outline the topics you would like to cover.

Group discussion notes:

Bullies and victims of bullying – including cyberbullying – have an increased risk for exhibiting problem behaviors (e.g., aggressive, verbal/physical altercations, blaming others). They also have a greater risk for mental health issues. Module 8 outlines warning signs that your child may be bullied and illustrates the warning signs that your child may be bullying.

Based on the warning signs listed, do you have any concerns about your child? If yes, what concerns do you have, and who could you contact for help? Potential support may be found from teachers, school counselors, and school administrators.

Group discussion notes:

Meeting 5 5

Discussion of Module 7 and 8
Healthy Relationships and Sexuality and Technology in Family Life

Meeting *(60 minutes)*
Homework *(60 minutes)*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	

Step 1: Attend Meeting

Step 2: Discuss Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Return to Meeting 4, Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions. Discuss the activities and questions as a group. What new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting? Note them in the magenta boxes under your responses.

To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after Meeting 4.

Step 3: Complete Homework [For discussion in Meeting 6]

_____ Complete the Wrap-Up.

_____ Prepare to discuss the Wrap-Up during the *next meeting* by answering the questions in Step 4.

_____ Review the Thrive website (https://thrive.psu.edu/), and tell your facilitator what Thrive initiative program is most appropriate for your family to complete next.

Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Use the blue boxes on the next few pages to prepare your responses for the *next meeting*. During the *Meeting 6* group discussion, you can use the magenta boxes to record your notes.

As you complete these questions and activities, recognize that changes will not happen overnight. You will need to use the strategies and skills learned throughout Branch Out consistently in your everyday life to see the desired changes in your child's reactions or behaviors. Keep practicing.

When you meet as a group, share and celebrate the small, short-term positive changes you see with your child, and consider what the long-term benefits may be with continued use of the skills and strategies you are learning with Branch Out!

Conclusion/Wrap-Up Module Discussion Questions

? **Which topic discussed in Branch Out was the most beneficial to you as a parent? Why?**

Group discussion notes:

? You were introduced to multiple families throughout Branch Out, and each family encountered a different challenging situation or developmental milestone. Which family or families' situation did you most relate to and why?

Group discussion notes:

? **What strategies or skills did you learn in Branch Out that will help you achieve the goals you have for your family?**

Group discussion notes:

Discuss your answers to the following questions.

What has changed about your interactions with your child since we started? Do you notice a difference in the way you respond to your child's behaviors? Do you notice a difference in the way your child responds to you?

Grow discussion notes:

Think about a recent situation in which you used a strategy you learned in Branch Out. How does your current reaction compare to how you may have reacted prior to engaging in Branch Out training? What was different? How did your child respond?

Group discussion notes:

Meeting 6 [6]

Wrap Up and Resource Sharing *45 minutes*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	

Step 1: Attend Meeting

Meeting Events

_____ Complete any required follow-up paperwork.

_____ Share the program from Thrive that would be most appropriate for your family to complete next.

_____ Share a timeline for when you think you'll start the next program **[Optional]**.

_____ Download your Completion Certificate.

_____ Collect any additional resources that the facilitator has prepared for you.

Step 2: Discuss Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Return to Meeting 5, Step 4: Prepare Community Building Activities/Discussion Questions. Discuss the activities and questions as a group. What new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting? Note them in the magenta boxes under your responses.

To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after Meeting 5.

Step 3: Register for the next Thrive Program [Optional]

For more in-depth exploration of specified topics related to school age children, visit the Thrive website (https://thrive.psu.edu/), and review the supplemental module content for the most up-to-date offerings.

Additional online Thrive programming is available for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 18. Visit the Thrive website, and, if interested, register for the next Thrive initiative that is applicable for your developing child(ren).

Thrive Initiative Program Areas			
Universal Parenting Programs			
Take Root	**Sprout**	**Grow**	**Branch Out**
Infants (0 to 6 months)	**Preschool (3 to 5 years)**	**Grades K–5 (5 to 10 years)**	**Grades 6–12 (10 to 18 years)**
Infants (6 to 12 months)			
Infants & Toddlers (1 to 3 years)			

Thank you for completing this hybrid implementation of Branch Out! We hope you will frequently visit the Thrive website to continue to learn positive parenting practices, stress management techniques, and ways to promote physical health throughout your child's development.

Appendix E

Branch Out Screen Share Text Example

Thank you for joining our meeting for

🌱 branch out

The meeting will start at

🔊 *You should hear soft music playing.*

Take this opportunity to test your microphone, video, and other settings.

If you need technical assistance:

Email   *or*

Call   at

Appendix F

Best Practices for Online Learning

Best Practices for Online Learning

You can enhance your experience of this training by doing the following:

Joining the meeting early to test settings.

Testing your technology with a friend or family member prior to your meeting.

Finding a quiet place to complete the meetings.

Using a headset or headphones for voice clarity.

Knowing who to contact, and how, if you cannot connect or are having technical difficulties.

Having a backup plan if your computer won't connect to the meeting. Perhaps there is a call-in number so you can hear the meeting.